Utah's Caseload Reduction Credit Report

Open for Public Comment until:

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To submit comments please contact:

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FORM ACF-202 – TANF CASELOAD REDUCTION REPORT

Date of Completion: December 16, 2015	
State: Utah	**Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**
Overall Report X Two-parent Report _ (check one)	Apply the overall credit to the two-parent participation rate? __ yes X no

PART 1 –Eligibility Changes Made Since FY 2005
(Complete this section for EACH change)

1. Name of eligibility change: FEP Job Search Extension
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: November 1, 2006; October 1, 2009
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   A parent may be eligible for a FEP Job Search Extension if they are no longer eligible for an extension reason and need additional time to obtain employment. This extension reason is only for one month.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change (attach supporting materials to this form):

   This extension was not available prior to the implementation date. A query was run to determine how many customers received the job search extension from October, 2014 to September, 2015. This duration is reflected on the impact table, resulting in an estimated average increase of 2 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: +2

FORM ACF-202 – TANF CASELOAD REDUCTION REPORT

Date of Completion: December 16, 2015

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: FEP Medically Needy Dependent Family Member Extension
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: May 1, 2009
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   The term "Family Member" was added to the Utah extension for caring for a medically needy dependent. This family member must be in the same household of the parent applying for the extension and must meet one of the following relationships: A child, spouse or other parent of dependent children. Clarification was added to the policy to require the amount of time the parent providing the care needs to spend physically home caring for the dependent.

   Previous policy did not define the term "dependent," nor was there a requirement that the dependent reside in the same household as the parent applying for the extension. Previous policy required the diagnosis and treatment of the dependent receiving care and the amount of time needed in the home but did not specify the time the parent was required to care for the family member.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   To determine the impact of these policy changes to the caseload, a query was run to determine the average monthly number of customers who received this extension from FY 2008-2009; the policy change was effective May 1, 2009. The query resulted in an average of 12 customers per month.

   Another query was run to determine the number of customers who received this extension between October, 2014 and September, 2015. To complete the impact table the difference between the average customer count from FY 2008-2009 and the actual customer count for FY 2015 was listed. This methodology resulted in an estimated average increase of 6 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: +6

Form ACF-202 – TANF Caseload Reduction Report

Date of Completion: December 16, 2015

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: FEP Employment Extension

2. Implementation date of eligibility change: May 1, 2007

3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   Extension policy was changed to simplify eligibility extensions for employed families who reached their 36-month lifetime limit. To qualify for an employment extension a parent must be employed the previous two months and be working at least 20 hours per week the month financial assistance is being authorized. Extensions may be granted for up to six months at a time.

   Prior policy required the following of the parent:

   a. Be employed for no less than 80 hours during the previous month,

   b. Be employed for no less than 80 hours per month for at least 6 of the previous 24 months, and

   c. Be employed for no less than 80 hours in the month financial assistance was authorized.

   Eligibility was determined on a monthly basis.

   Under both policies, the employment extension is time limited to 24 months by state statute.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   To determine the impact of these policy changes to the caseload a query was run to determine the average monthly number of customers who received this extension in FY 2007 just prior to the policy change. The query resulted in an average of 8 customers per month.

   An additional query was run to determine the number of customers who received this extension between October, 2014 and September, 2015. To complete the impact table the difference between the average customer count from FY 2007 and the actual customer count for FY 2015 was listed. This methodology resulted in an estimated average decrease of 4 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: -4

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Date of Completion: December 16, 2015

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: Activity Review
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: November 1, 2010; January 1, 2014
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   Utah's sanction process is now called Activity Review. The goal is to review the current activities on the customer's employment plan for appropriateness and provide flexibility for re-engagement activities when it is determined that the customer is not participating. Customers are provided correspondence about the consequences of non-participation, as well as the opportunity to make an informed choice about their case and provide reasonable cause. A modification was made to the policy to allow customers the opportunity to resolve Activity Review prior to the case closing if they obtain verified employment, re-engage in required activities or provide reasonable cause. This prevents non-participation closure when the customer begins participating during the month of expected closure. The grant is no longer reduced by $100 during this process. The case is sanctioned for one full month if the customer is unable to demonstrate participation or provide reasonable cause. After the one-month sanction, the customer may reapply for benefits and complete a trial participation for the duration of up to two weeks in order for their benefits to be reopened.

   Prior to this policy being implemented, the FEP Conciliation process included three levels and a two-week trial participation period. During each of these levels, the customer was provided opportunities to make informed choices about participation, with only minor consequences resulting from those choices. If it was determined the customer was not participating, the grant was reduced by $100 for up to two months before the case closed. During that time, the customer could demonstrate participation and have the grant restored during a reduction month. Conversely, if the case did close for non-participation, the customer could reapply for benefits immediately. After the trial participation was complete the customer could receive the full grant, without missing a month of benefits.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   To determine the impact of this policy change to the caseload, a query was run to determine the average monthly number of cases for which non-participation was resolved in FY 2005, thus preventing the actual closure. The query resulted in an average of 52 cases per month.

   To complete the impact table the difference between the average numbers of prevented non-participation closures for FY 2015 was listed. To account for an ongoing impact, the number of cases was carried through for 12 months. This methodology resulted in an estimated average decrease of 36 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: -36

FORM ACF-202 – TANF CASELOAD REDUCTION REPORT

Date of Completion: December 16, 2015

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: Transitional Cash Assistance (TCA)/Retention
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: February 1, 2007; January 1, 2010; April 1, 2012; October 1, 2014
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   In February, 2007, a new program called Transitional Cash Assistance was implemented to provide transitional support services to FEP families whose income closes the FEP cash assistance and more than half of the case income is from earnings. Transitional services help families to stabilize after the loss of financial assistance, sustain employment and reduce recidivism. Customers that meet the criteria are eligible to receive TCA for three months unless there is a loss of employment or they do not cooperate with the Office of Recovery Services. They receive a full household FEP payment during the first two months and a ½ payment during the third month. Prior to this program being implemented, when an employed customer became ineligible for TANF due to income, their case would close.

   In January, 2010, TCA was updated to say a FEP household is eligible for TCA if their case closes for income and the earned income is greater than the unearned income for the FEP household. The customer no longer needed to meet a 30 hours per week requirement.

   In April, 2012, TCA was updated to say a FEP household is no longer eligible for TCA when an absent parent with income moves into the household, and the income of the parent being added to the FEP case causes the FEP to close. The household is not eligible for TCA because the absent parent was not included in the FEP grant the month it was closed for income.

   In October, 2014, TCA was updated to say a FEP household is eligible for TCA if their case closes for income and they are employed an average of 30 hours per week for each month of TCA.

   TCA is solely a state-funded program. These monies are being used to count toward Utah's basic MOE expenditure requirements.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   Since this program was not available prior to its implementation date, queries were run to determine how many customers received the TCA payments from October, 2014 to September, 2015. The actual monthly count of cases was used to determine the impact. This methodology resulted in an estimated average increase of 161 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: +161

Form ACF-202 – TANF Caseload Reduction Report

Date of Completion: **December 16, 2015**

State: **Utah** **Fiscal Year to which credit applies:** **2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: Substance Abuse Determination Process
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: August 1, 2012
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   A customer applying for FEP is required to complete a Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) questionnaire during the application period. The results of the SASSI do not affect the customer's eligibility. If the result of the questionnaire determines the customer has a "high probability" of using substances, the customer is then required to complete a drug test within a specified timeframe of the case opening. The results of the drug test do not affect a customer's eligibility for benefits, but failing to register for or complete the drug test will result in a non-compliance sanction. If the drug test is positive, the customer is then required to enter into a minimum of 60 days of substance abuse treatment, as determined by the Department's licensed clinical therapist. If the customer refuses to enter into treatment, fails treatment or tests positive on any subsequent Department-required drug tests, the customer receives a non-compliance sanction.

   A customer who is sanctioned for non-compliance with the Substance Abuse Determination Process will be sanctioned for three months for the first occurrence, or one year if there are two such occurrences within the same year.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   To determine the impact, all cases were pulled from our database that closed for non-compliance between October, 2014 and September, 2015. The first sanction is for three months, and any subsequent sanction within the next 12-month period is for 12 months. The non-compliance closures were counted and carried through for their respective sanction length to account for the ongoing impact. This methodology resulted in an average monthly decrease of 53 cases.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: -53

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Date of Completion: <u>December 16, 2015</u>

State: <u>Utah</u> **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: <u>2016</u>**

1. Name of eligibility change: Next Generation Kids Extension (NGK)
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: September 9, 2014
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   A customer may be eligible for the Next Generation Kids Extension if the customer is currently participating in the Intergenerational Welfare Dependency Poverty / Next Generation Kids Program and needs additional time to obtain job training and preparation to decrease the risk of his/her children being part of intergenerational welfare dependency. If a customer is no longer part of the Next Generation Kids Program, they will no longer be eligible for this extension.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   This extension was not available prior to the implementation date. A query was run to determine how many customers received the NGK extension from October, 2014 through September, 2015. This methodology resulted in an estimated average increase of 4 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: <u>+4</u>

Form ACF-202 – TANF Caseload Reduction Report

Date of Completion: **December 16, 2015**

State: **Utah** **Fiscal Year to which credit applies:** **2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: Same Sex Marriage
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: January 1, 2014; October 6, 2014
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   Between December 20, 2013 and January 6, 2014 same-sex marriages were performed in the state of Utah. On January 6, 2014 the Supreme Court ordered a halt to same-sex marriages in Utah.

   For applications completed between December 20, 2013 and January 6, 2014, where a customer in a same-sex marriage applied, both spouses were included in the eligibility determination. If the marriage was performed in Utah, same-sex marriages were recognized for eligibility determinations on future applications. If the same-sex marriage was not performed in Utah, the marriage was not recognized on applications received after January 6, 2014.

   On October 6, 2014 all same-sex marriages performed in Utah and all other states are considered legal marriages for eligibility determinations.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   This change was not available prior to the implementation date. A query was run to determine the number of cases with recipients in same-sex marriages from October, 2014 through September, 2015. This methodology resulted in an estimated average increase of 1 case per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: +1

FORM ACF-202 – TANF CASELOAD REDUCTION REPORT

Date of Completion: December 16, 2015

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: Specified Relative
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: September 1, 2015
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   Previous policy stated that a relative who has a specific relationship to a child in the home may apply for financial assistance for the child if they meet one of the following relationships: Grandfather/grandmother, brother/sister, uncle/aunt, first cousin, first cousin once removed, nephew/niece, persons of preceding generations as designated by prefixes of grand, great, great-great or great-great-great, spouses of any relative even if the marriage has been terminated, step relationships, brothers and sisters by legal adoption, ex-stepparents, or individuals who can prove that they met one of the aforementioned relationships via blood relationship, even though the legal relationship has been terminated.

   The Specified Relative program was updated to include two additional relationships for Native American and refugee cultures, including:

   - A Native American adult who has a Native American child placed in, or living in, that adult's home, and both the child and the adult are members of, or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized tribe;
   - An adult of the same ethnicity, culture, country of origin, religion, language and/or nationality as the refugee/asylee child in his or her care.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   To calculate the impact of this change a query was run to determine the average number of specified relative cases with Native American or alien recipients in FY 2014-2015 prior to the policy change. This query resulted in a monthly average of 92 cases. That figure was compared to the count for September, 2015, which was also 92, resulting in no discernable impact to the comparison year.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: 0

Form ACF-202 – TANF Caseload Reduction Report

Date of Completion: **<u>December 16, 2015</u>**

State: Utah **Fiscal Year to which credit applies: 2016**

1. Name of eligibility change: FEP Two-Parent
2. Implementation date of eligibility change: October 1, 2006
3. Description of policy, including the change from prior policy:

   The state discontinued using State MOE funds to pay for FEP-TP assistance.

4. Description of the methodology used to calculate the estimated impact of this eligibility change: (attach supporting materials to this form)

   Utah's Two-Parent Family Program is still solely state-funded and is used to fulfill Utah's MOE expenditure requirement. A query was run to determine the number of two-parent TANF recipients with two work-eligible individuals for FY 2015. A count was generated of these cases for each report month. As a case is represented each and every time it receives a FEP benefit during the fiscal year cases are not aged. This methodology resulted in an estimated average decrease of 17 cases per month.

5. Estimated average monthly impact of this eligibility change on caseload in comparison year: -17